



## Exercise 1.1

# Piecing Connections Together



One characteristic of wildland-urban interface issues is that they are interconnected. Understanding these connections helps resource professionals work to improve conditions in the interface. This exercise serves as an icebreaker by getting participants to stand up, move around, work with others, and share ideas within the group. It can also launch a training workshop with any of the other modules.

**Objectives:** Participants will be able to do the following:

1. Identify general interface issues and possible solutions.
2. Actively participate, cooperate, and engage in discussion about connections between interface issues and solutions.
3. Recognize the interconnectedness of interface issues and be able to identify at least two issues that are connected.

**Materials:**

Puzzle pieces  
Flip charts  
Markers (optional)  
*Presentation 1.1*

**Time:** 30 minutes

1. Introduce the main purpose of the exercise to the participants by saying something like:

*The purpose of this exercise is to get us thinking about interface issues, possible solutions to interface problems, and the connections between interface issues. It gets us moving around, working with others, and sharing ideas within our group.*

2. You may want to use the slides in **Presentation 1.1** that have the directions to this exercise. Ask your participants to stand in a circle and then distribute the puzzle pieces as evenly as possible throughout the group. The number of pieces each participant receives depends on the size of your group. If your group is small, each participant may have two or three pieces. If your group is large, you can split the group into teams that will share one piece. Some individuals or teams may have more pieces than others and that is okay. **IMPORTANT:** Hold on to the yellow puzzle piece marked “YOU” until the end of the exercise; do not distribute or show it to the participants.

3. Explain to the group that each puzzle piece is labeled with a wildland-urban interface problem or potential solution. Ask them to randomly pair up with another person or team; their puzzle pieces don't have to fit together or be the same color. Ask them to identify how the items on their puzzle pieces are related. They may think of multiple connections.
4. Next, go around the room and ask the pairs to share the connections they came up with. After each pair or team shares their ideas, ask the group to add any other connections they can think of for those particular puzzle pieces.
5. Once everyone has shared their thoughts, ask the group members to find a new partner or team. Repeat steps 3-4. (Note: This step can be deleted if you are short on time.)
6. When everyone has taken his or her turn, it's time to put the entire puzzle together. Direct the group to a table and ask them to assemble the puzzle. This may take some time and will require teamwork. If they need a hint, you can tell them that the color is irrelevant and the words are oriented in the same direction. Once they finish it will be apparent that a piece is missing from the middle. Ask if anyone has an idea of what lies in the center of these issues and solutions in the wildland-urban interface. Then place the "YOU" piece in the center of the puzzle.
7. If there's time it may be valuable to discuss the group's thoughts about the role of natural resource professionals in interface issues and management. Ask them to share any connections that they found surprising or personal experiences with interface issues. You may want to write responses on a flip chart. Following are some potential discussion questions:
  - Who are the players in interface issues? Who can we work with to solve problems?
  - Where in our district/region are interface issues characterized by *fire* and where are *water* issues of most concern? (Change italicized topics to meet your needs)
  - What is the role of local policy in solving or preventing interface problems?
  - Can we manage interface resources differently to reduce problems?
8. Give the group time for discussion at the end of the exercise if needed.

## Summary

Working to solve one interface problem can ultimately have an effect on other problems in the interface because they are interconnected. This exercise begins to help natural resource professionals discuss how issues are connected and how they can come up with solutions that affect more than one problem. It also helps them to see how they are part of the solution to interface problems.